REVEALING
THE TRUTH

To know the Shia'a

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1. To know the Shia'a

The word Shi'a, to quote Ibn Manzur(1), means **"those people who love what the Prophet's Progeny loves, and they are loyal to such Progeny"*.*** Hameedullah Khan (2) states **"Shiat Ali means specifically that party which, after the death of the Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) attached itself to Hazrat Ali...considering him the successor of the Prophet (PBUH) both in temporal and religious matters".**
1. Lisan al-'Arab, by Ibn Manzur, vol. 8, p189
2. Schools of Islamic Jurisprudence, by Hameedullah Khan p121

The term Shi'a in fact derives its actual origin from the Qur'an, in which Allah (swt) calls Prophet Ibrahim (as) a Shi'a of Prophet Nuh(as) (1). In another verse Allah (swt) informs us of a fight between two men, one was a Shi'a of Prophet Musa (as) and the other was an enemy of Musa(as) (2).
1. The Holy Qur'an 37:83
2. The Holy Qur'an 28:15

It is in praise of the Shi'a of Ali that Allah (swt) sent down the following revelation: **"Those who believe and do righteous deeds are the best of the creatures. Their reward from their Lord shall be everlasting gardens, below which flow rivers, they will abide there forever. Well pleased is God with them and they are well pleased with Him.**
The Holy Qur'an 98:7

Numerous recognised Sunni scholars have in their commentaries recorded that following the descent of this verse the Prophet (s) declared: **"I swear by the one who controls my life that this man (Ali) and his Shi'a shall secure deliverance on the day of resurrection".**
Tafsir Ibne Jarir, Volume 33 page 146 (Cairo edition) narrated from Hadhrath Muhammad bin Ali (as); Tafsir Durre Manthur by Jalaladeen Suyuti, Volume 6 page 379 -3 separate chains; Tafsir Fatha ul bayan Volume 10 page 333 (Egypt edition)

If the Prophet (s)'s said the best of creations are Hadhrath Ali (as) and his Shi'a, then in the same way that this verse is applicable until the end of the world, Ali (as)'s Shi'a will likewise exist to provide a practical commentary to it. The Ahl'ul Sunnah believe that 70,000 Muslims will enter paradise without answering any questions (1) and Anas bin Malik, narrates that the Prophet (s) said that the 70,000 were Ali and his Shi'a (2). There are no traditions, in which the Prophet (s) guaranteed paradise for any other companion and his followers. These hadith prove that the Shi'a were not a Sect founded by fictitious Abdullah bin Saba but were adherents to Ali (as) who existed during the lifetime of the Prophet (s).
1. Islam: The Basic Articles of Faith - According to the Beliefs of the Ahl al Sunna wa al Jama'a - a Modern English translation of Bahar-e-Shariat Part One (Unnamed author) page 67 - quoting a hadith to this effect
2. Manaqib Ali al Murtaza, page 184 by al Maghazli (An ancient Shafi scholar)

Unable to refute the hadith the tendency has been to provide an 'alternative' explanation. The highly respected Sunni scholar Al Muhaddith Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz Dehlavi in his discussion of hadith relating to Ali and his Shi'a writes:

"The title Shi'a was first given to those Muhajireen and Ansar who gave allegiance (bay'ah) to Ali (may Allah enlighten his face). They were his steadfast faithful followers during his (Ali's) caliphate. They remained close to him, they always fought his enemies, and kept on following Ali's commands and prohibitions. The true Shi'a are these who came in 37 Hijri"
(NB: 37 Hijri -the year Imam Ali (as) fought Mu'awiya at Sifeen).
Tuhfa Ithna 'Ashariyyah, (Gift to the Twelvers) (Farsi edition p 18, publishers Sohail Academy, Lahore, Pakistan)

Although we believe that the title Shi'a goes back before this date, as this book is a 'revered anti Shi'a masterpiece', we will gladly accept this definition. Dehlavi states the first Shi'a, were the Muhajirun and Ansar, in other words they were the Prophet (s)'s Sahaba who sided with Ali (as) against Mu'awiya.

Now let us break down that definition in to point form. The Shi'a were those who:

- Pledged their allegiance to Ali (as)
- Remained close to him
- Followed his orders
- Fought his enemies

Alhamdullillah that is exactly the same definition of the Shi'a today. All the above attributes of the Shi'a then, are still inherent in the Shi'a today. We reject claims that we have gone astray having failed to take our teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah from the Sahaba. As Shi'a we follow Ali (as) and take the Sunnah from him in accordance with the dictates of the Prophet (s) who said to Ali (as) in the presence of the Sahaba:

"You are my brother and inheritor", when the Companions asked what previous Prophets had left as inheritance, he replied "The Book of God and his Sunnah the teachings of that Prophet".
Riyad al-Nadira, by Muhibbuddin al Tabari, Vol 3 p 123

Ali (as) inherited the Qur'an and Sunnah and his Shi'a have likewise taken their knowledge of the Qur'an and Sunnah from him. We are Shi'a because we see no other Hadi (guide) which will lead us to the right path.

Allah (swt) says about the Prophet (s): **"Verily you are a Warner and for every nation there is a Guide"** (1). Numerous Sunni authorities of Tafsir (2) in their commentary of this verse have recorded that the Prophet (s) said: **"I am Warner and Ali is the guide, he (s) then turned to Ali and said 'Ali people will be guided through you'"**. Other Sunni scholars have also recorded this hadith (3).
1. The Holy Qur'an Surah Ra'd verse 7
2. Tafsir Durr al-Manthur by Suyuti Vol4 p 45; Tafsir al Kabir, by Fakhruddin Razi in the commentary of the verse; Tafsir Ruh al Ma'ani, by Allamah Alusi
3. Mustadrak, by al Hakim, Vol 3 hadith 129 & 130

We view Imam Ali as our guide, Hadhrath Abu Bakr does not come within this definition in his inaugural speech he indicated that he would be turning to others for guidance:

"Now then: O people, I have been put in charge of you, although I am not the best of you. Help me if I do well; rectify me if I do wrong"
Tarikh al-Tabari, English translation Volume 9 p 201

Compare these words to the challenge of Imam Ali (as) related by Sa'id ibn al-Musayyab who said:

"None of the Companions say, Ask me (about anything you like)! except for Ali".
History of the Khalifas who took the right way, by Suyuti, translated by Abdassamad Clarke, p178 (Taha Publishers)

Ali (as) also acted as source of guidance for the second Khalifa, to quote the Wahhabi scholar Nadwi **"Umar was often exacerbated if Ali was not available to solve an entangled problem. He often used to say: 'Umar would have been ruined if Ali was not there'.."**
The life of Caliph Ali, by Abul Hasan Nadvi, page 202

When there exist clear hadith guaranteeing salvation for Ali (as)'s Shi'a on the Day of Judgement, why should we seek alternative groups to affiliate ourselves with? Our view is strengthened yet further when we read that Hadhrath Abu Bakr narrates that he heard the Prophet (s) say that: **"No one will be able to cross the Sirat (Path) leading to Heaven on the Day of Judgement unless he gets the stamp of Ali".**
Al Sawaiq al Muhriqa, by Ahmad Ibn Hajar al Makki, page 126 (A book written against the Shi'a)

How can we turn to others, when Allah (swt) says in His Glorious Book: **"On the Day when some faces will be bright and some faces will be black, And as for those whose faces will have turned black, it will be said 'What did you disbelieve after believing, taste the chastisement for your disbelief'. And as for those whose faces are white, they shall be in the Mercy of God, they shall abide therein forever".**
The Holy Qur'an 3:106-107

It is clear from this verse that the successful Party on the Day of Judgement will be those, whose faces are bright. Now apply this verse to the following hadith, taken from two recognised Sunni works: **"Three things have been revealed to me about Ali: That he is the Sayyid al Muslimeen (Chief of Muslims), Imam-ul-Muttaqeen (Imam of the Pious), and wa Qa'id ul Ghurrul Muhajj'ileen (Leader of the bright) face people on Yaum al Qiyamah".**
Al Mustadrak, by Imam Hakim, p 137 & 138
Riyad al Nadira, by Mohibbudin al Tabari, Vol 2, p 122

So Ali (as) will be the leader of the bright face people, the bright face people will follow him i.e. they will be his Shi'a and it is this group which will attain Paradise. The Prophet (s) said in a Sahih hadith that Muslims would be divided into 73 sects of which only one would attain paradise. It is for this sole reason that we connect ourselves with Ali (as). Our Sunni brothers ascribe to the view that **"Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) did not nominate his successor nor left any explicit an instruction on the question of selection or appointment of his successor".**
An introduction to Islamic State and Government, by Muhammad Sharif Chaudhry, p 56, (Islamic Bk Publishers, Kuwait).

They believe that it is the duty of the public appoint an Imam and that it is so important that **"the companions preferred it to attending the Prophet's funeral"** (1). The Shi'a believe that it was incumbent upon the Prophet (s) to appoint a successor. Even the least enlightened leader dies with at least indicating his preferred choice of successor. There is always a deputy to the Premier in case the Premier dies or is killed. The primary motive here is of course to ensure that in the event of war that the nation is not left leaderless with no commander-in-chief, for even the smallest time interval. Did the Prophet not care, about what would happen to his followers after his death?
Sharh Fiqh Akbar, by Mulla Ali Qari, p 175 (publishers Muhammad Sa'eed and son, Qur'an Muhall, Karachi)

In the same way that the role of a GP is to identify the condition of his patients and potential risks to their health we can point to the fact that the Prophet (s) did just that. He told the companions not to become kaffirs by killing each other (1) and predicted that afflictions would fall on to their homes in the same way that rain drops fall (2) and that some would become apostates after him (3) with the majority perishing in the fire (4).
1. Sahih al Bukhari Arabic - English, Volume 9 hadith number 198 - 200
2. Sahih al Bukhari Arabic - English, Volume 9 hadith number 182
3. Sahih al Bukhari Arabic - English, Volume 8 hadith number 586
4. Sahih al Bukhari Arabic - English, Volume 8 hadith number 587

At the same time the Prophet (s) was fully aware of the threat imposed by the neighbouring Byzantine and Persian empires, what better time would there have been to attack the Muslims when their Prophet (s) had died. In the same way that a GP after identifying a condition

prescribes medication for his patient, we believe that the Prophet (s) was fully aware of the risks facing the nascent Ummah and provided a remedy by fixing in to position an Imam (Leader) to guide the Muslims after him. This is clear from the hadith of our Prophet (s) recorded by the renowned Wahhabi scholar Shah Isma'il Shaheed (1): **"If you make Ali your Khalifa, although I do not think you will, you will find him to be a Guide (Hadi), one who is Guided (Mahdi), and one who will take you to the Right Path (Siratul Mustaqim)"** (2).

1. About Shah Isma'il, the editor of the English translation of Taqwiyatul Iman (Strengthening the faith) page 9 writes "The services which he has rendered for the reformation of Ummah (the mission of propagating Islam); especially after the previous works of Shaykhul Islam Imam Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad bin Abdul Wahab are absolutely unforgettable". In his book 'Muslim heroes of the world' the Sunni scholar Muhammad Atiqul Haque quotes Allamah Iqbal on page 117 as saying "India has so far produced one great 'alim and his name is Isma'il".
2. Mansab-e-Imamat, by Shah Isma'il Shaheed, p 46

We rely on an event that took following the completion of the Final Hajj when the Prophet (s) stopped at a place called Ghadhir Khumm, and addressed the companions **"Do I have more authority over you than you have over yourselves? To which the people said 'Yes'. He then said Of whomsoever I am Mawla Ali is his Mawla"** (1). There is no doubting the authenticity of this narration it is a Mutawatir tradition (2) narrated by 110 Companions, the difference is over the word 'Mawla'. Those who define Mawla as 'friend' and hence view Ghadhir Khumm as an event in which the Prophet (s) reaffirmed Ali (as) was his friend are Sunni Muslims. Those who define Mawla as Master and assert that Ali (as) was declared the Master / Imam over the Muslims are Shi'a Muslims.

1. Musnad, by Ahmad bin Hanbal Vol 3 p116 Sader Printing 1969
2. Mutawatir means it has numerous chains of narrators

It is the issue of Imamate (Leadership) which is the key difference between the two schools, we however are yet to find a better explanation of the position of an Imam than that offered by Shah Isma'il Shaheed:

"The Imam is the Prophet's successor, the Imam has the same relations with Allah as the Prophet had with Allah. The Imam is the leader, in the same way the Prophet had the right to lead the people, the Imam also has the same rights over the people. We read in Surah Azhab 'The Prophet is awla (authority) to the believers', and the Prophet will be a witness to this fact on the Day of Judgement. The Prophet has rights over the people, as does the Imam, both in this world and the next, which is why the Prophet said 'Don't I have more authority over the people than they have over themselves, to which the people replied 'Yes'. The Prophet then said 'Of whomsoever I am Mawla, Ali is his Mawla'. This is why Allah says in the Qur'an that on the Day of Judgement you will be called according to your Imam (3:17), and why when Allah says 'And stop they are to be questioned' (37:24), we will be asked about the Wilayat (The Mastership) of Ali on the Day of Judgement"
Mansab-e-Imamat, by Shah Isma'il Shaheed, p 71

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